

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 20, 2012

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 15, 2012

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2011–12 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 31

Introduced by Assembly Members Perea, John A. Pérez, and Cook
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Achadjian, Alejo, Allen, Ammiano,
Atkins, Beall, Block, Bonilla, Bradford, Brownley, Buchanan,
Butler, Charles Calderon, Campos, Carter, Cedillo, Chesbro,
Conway, Dickinson, Donnelly, Feuer, Fong, Beth Gaines, Garrick,
Gatto, Gordon, Grove, Hagman, Halderman, Hall,
Roger Hernández, Hill, Huber, Hueso, Huffman, Jeffries, Jones,
Knight, Lara, Ma, Mansoor, Mendoza, Mitchell, Monning,
Morrell, Pan, Portantino, Silva, Skinner, Smyth, Solorio,
Swanson, Torres, Valadao, Wagner, Wieckowski, Williams, and
Yamada)

(Coauthors: Senators Berryhill, Correa, Dutton, Lowenthal, Rubio,
Runner, Strickland, Wright)

March 12, 2012

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 31—Relative to the 144th Fighter Wing.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 31, as amended, Perea. 144th Fighter Wing.

This measure would respectfully request Congress and the Department of Defense to remain committed to maintaining the 144th Fighter Wing and the Aerospace Control Alert mission in California in order to prevent any negative impacts to Southwest air defense operations, the California

economy, and the ability of first responders to protect the residents of this state.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The California Air National Guard 144th Fighter
2 Wing located in Fresno is composed of 1,046 airmen, 22 F-16
3 aircraft, and one RC-26 Intelligence, Surveillance and
4 Reconnaissance aircraft; and

5 WHEREAS, The primary mission of the 144th is to provide air
6 superiority worldwide in support of joint operations and Aerospace
7 Control Alert for the Southwest United States. This mission
8 requires the maintenance of a number of aircraft ready for
9 immediate launch to intercept air threats to the United States. The
10 California Air National Guard has the second busiest Aerospace
11 Control Alert mission in the United States behind the National
12 Capitol Region. Aircraft on alert are positioned at Fresno and
13 March Air Reserve Base at Riverside; and

14 WHEREAS, As part of the enacted fiscal year 2012 Federal
15 Budget, the 144th will begin to convert from F-16 aircraft to F-15
16 aircraft in August 2012. Aircraft conversion at the 144th Wing
17 involves replacing the F-16 aircraft with the F-15 aircraft in order
18 to provide a better platform to conduct the air superiority and air
19 defense missions. More than one-half of the support equipment
20 required for the F-15 conversion is on location, and maintenance
21 training began in May 2011. The first of 21 assigned F-15 aircraft
22 is scheduled to arrive at Fresno on August 15, 2012. The Fighter
23 Wing will have 18 F-15 aircraft by January 31, 2013, with the
24 balance scheduled to arrive by May 2013; and

25 WHEREAS, There is consideration within the Department of
26 Defense of ~~eliminating~~ *to eliminate* the 144th Fighter Wing and
27 ~~backfilling~~ *backfill* its air defense mission using aircraft, personnel,
28 and equipment from other states; and

29 WHEREAS, The initiative to divest the 144th Fighter Wing
30 would eliminate an air defense base consisting of 22 jets and
31 replace it with two out-of-state detachments consisting of six jets,
32 significantly increasing response time to increased threats; and

33 WHEREAS, California would lose valuable civilian support
34 capabilities and personnel trained and ready for a variety of
35 domestic emergencies. Law enforcement, fire, and other agencies
36 frequently rely on the 144th Fighter Wing's ground capabilities,

1 which include civil engineering, explosive ordnance disposal,
2 communications, aerial imaging, maintenance, logistics, and
3 medical support; and

4 WHEREAS, There would be significant operational costs to the
5 federal government associated with conducting an air defense alert
6 site for the Southwest United States from outside California. This
7 would include logistical costs to rotate personnel to their
8 assignments, as well as additional flying hours that would be
9 required to ferry out-of-state aircraft to the alert site after routine
10 maintenance. Additional costs would be incurred for maintaining
11 aircraft away from its home station, including the shipment of
12 equipment and supplies; and

13 WHEREAS, The closure of the 144th Fighter Wing would have
14 a devastating impact on the economies of Fresno and Riverside,
15 which already suffer from unemployment rates that are well above
16 the national rate. The 144th Fighter Wing employs 1,046 airmen
17 and women who have 1,642 dependents. The Air Force spends
18 over \$70 million dollars per year on the 144th Fighter Wing; and

19 WHEREAS, The proposal to divest the 144th Fighter Wing is
20 costly, places the Southwest air defense mission at risk, and
21 eliminates the ground capabilities available to support first
22 responders throughout the state and FEMA Region IX; now,
23 therefore, be it

24 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
25 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature respectfully requests
26 Congress and the Department of Defense to remain committed to
27 maintaining the 144th Fighter Wing and the Aerospace Control
28 Alert mission in California in order to prevent any negative impacts
29 to Southwest air defense operations, the California economy, and
30 the ability of first responders to protect the residents of this state;
31 and be it further

32 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
33 of this resolution to the Secretary of Defense and to each Senator
34 and Representative from California in the Congress of the United
35 States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.